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Two Rhymes.

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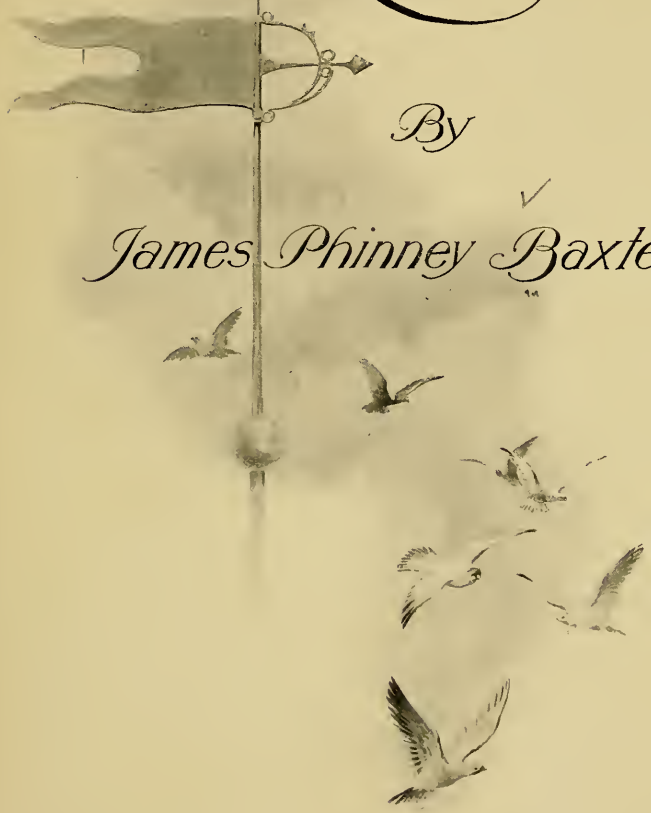

By

James Phinney Baxter

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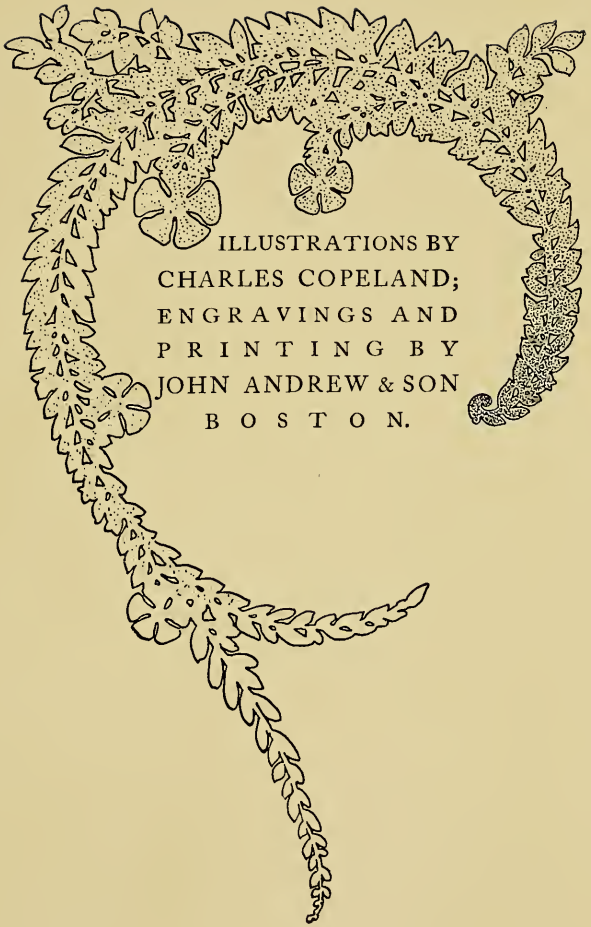

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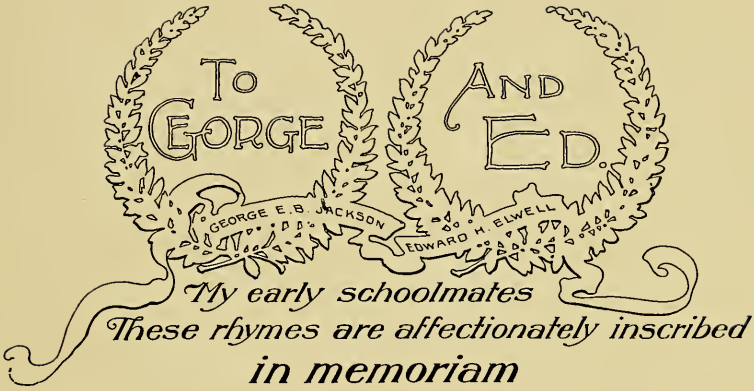
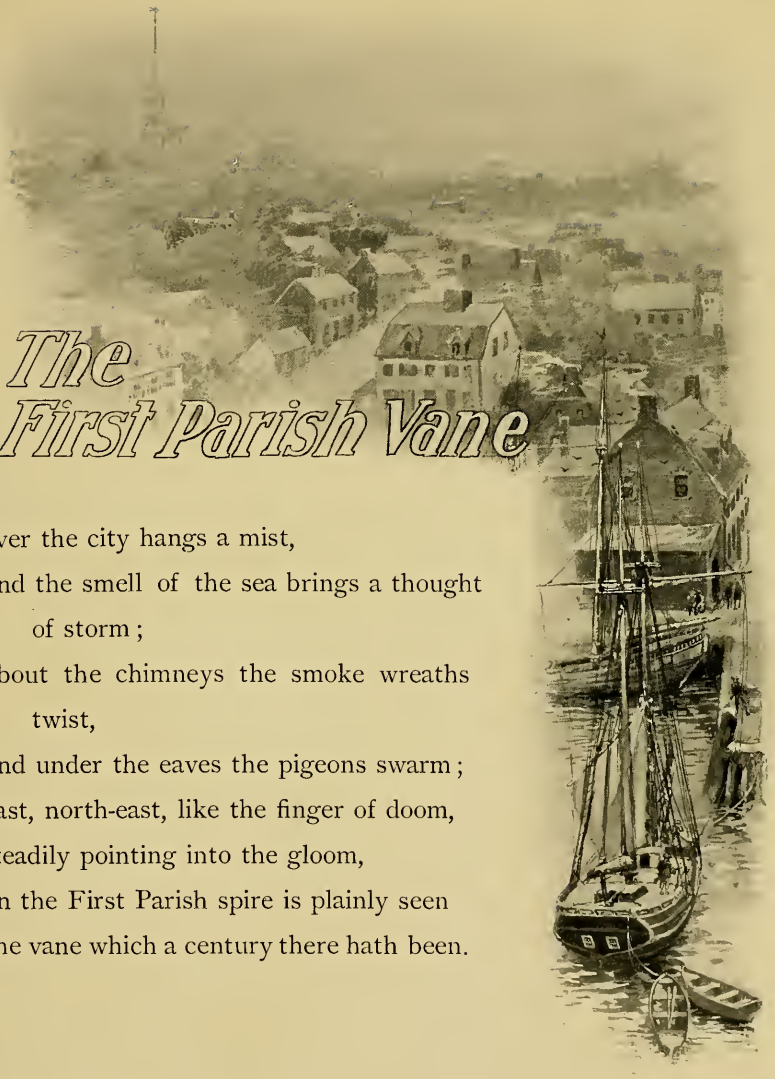
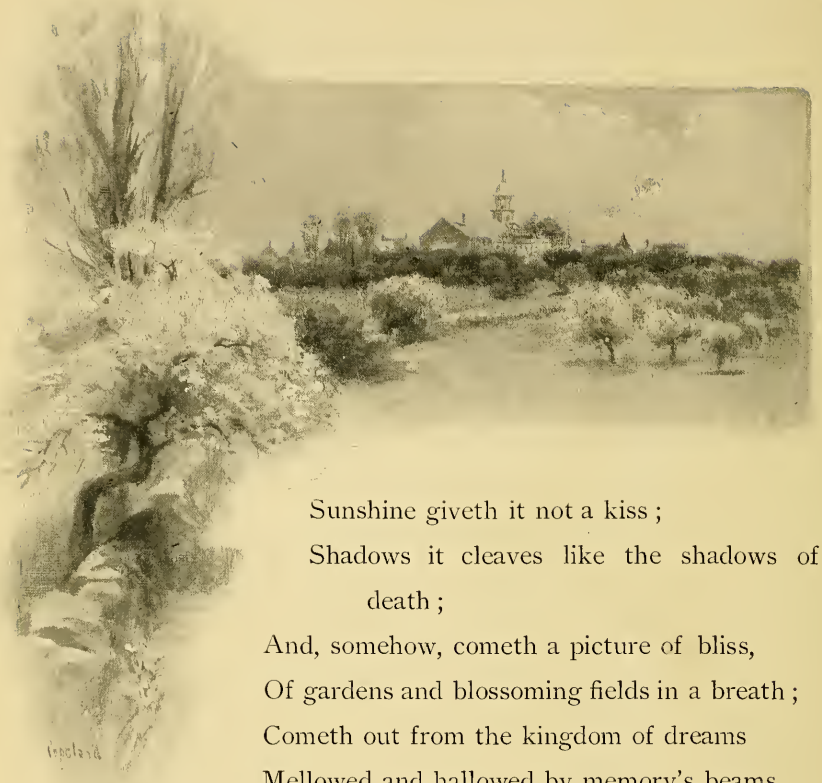


My early schoolmates
These rhymes are affectionately inscribed
in memoriam



The First Parish Vane

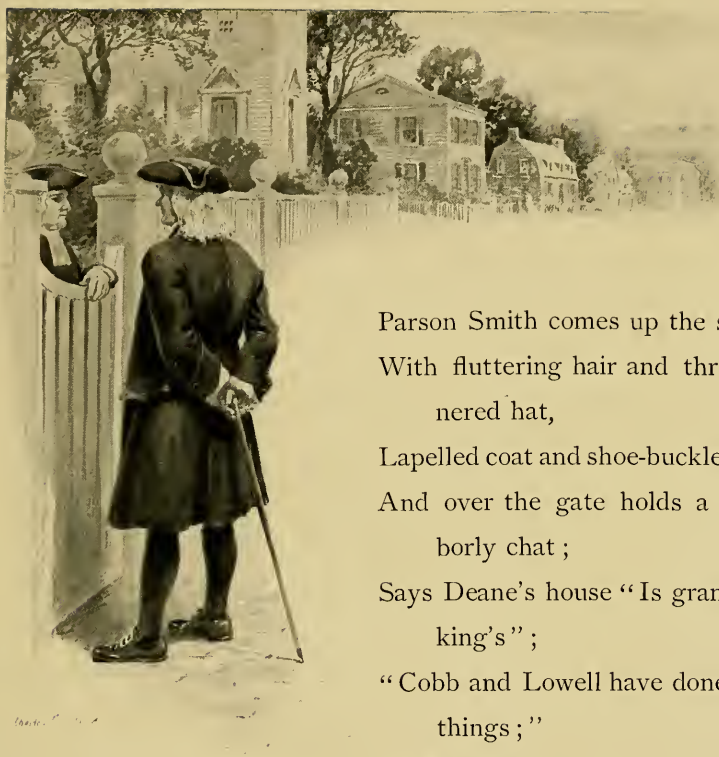
Over the city hangs a mist,
And the smell of the sea brings a thought
of storm;
About the chimneys the smoke wreaths
twist,
And under the eaves the pigeons swarm;
East, north-east, like the finger of doom,
Steadily pointing into the gloom,
On the First Parish spire is plainly seen
The vane which a century there hath been.



Sunshine giveth it not a kiss ;
Shadows it cleaves like the shadows of death ;
And, somehow, cometh a picture of bliss,
Of gardens and blossoming fields in a breath ;
Cometh out from the kingdom of dreams
Mellowed and hallowed by memory's beams,
And towers and spires and walls of stone,
And the busy marts with their crowds are gone.

Into the garden his young wife trips
Bearing a greeting upon her lips.

August, seventeen sixty-seven;
And here is Parson Samuel Deane;
He looks at the vane which swims in heaven,
And murmurs, "Wind west and the sky serene."
Into the garden his young wife trips
Bearing a greeting upon her lips,
While ever the robins amid the blaze
Of the currant bushes sweet tumult raise.

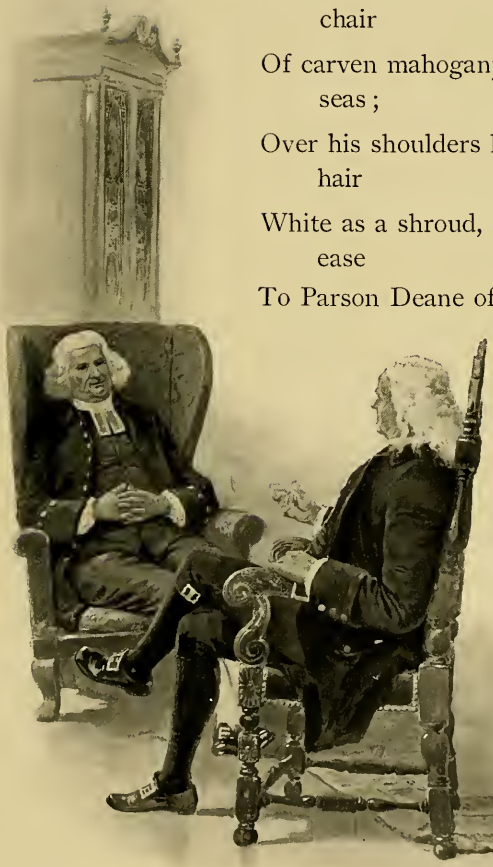


Parson Smith comes up the street
With fluttering hair and three-cornered hat,
Lapelled coat and shoe-buckled feet,
And over the gate holds a neighborly chat;
Says Deane's house "Is grand as a king's";
"Cobb and Lowell have done great things;"
"Till grandchildren's children inherit the land,
And longer yet shall their good work stand."

Autumn seventeen seventy-five;
An awful redness sweeps over the sky;
Whirlwinds of smoke through the city drive;
Hither and thither the people fly;
Mowat's guns in the distance boom,
Telling the city its terrible doom;
Yet over disaster and death and pain
Like a finger of hope points the silent vane.

Yet over disaster and death and pain
Like a finger of hope points the silent vane.

May eighth, seventeen eighty-eight ;
The soft winds blow through the greening fields
Up from the cove, and the robins prate
Of all the blisses which summer yields ;
And now to the parson's stately home
Fivescore damsels and dames have come
With threescore spinning wheels, every one
To whirl unceasing till day is done.

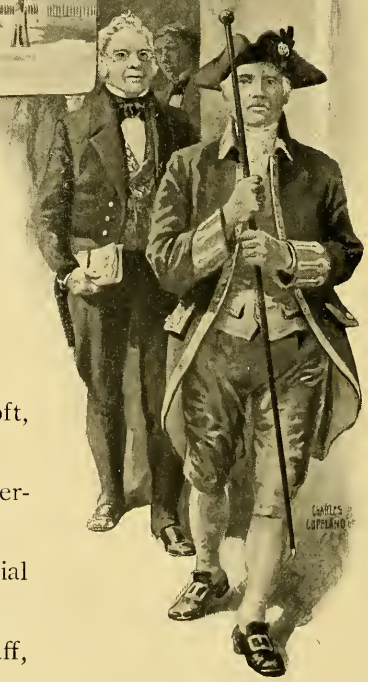


Parson Smith in a straight-backed
chair
Of carven mahogany brought over
seas;
Over his shoulders his long, thin
hair
White as a shroud, sits chatting at
ease
To Parson Deane of Pitchwood hill;

While Annie Pearson,
sixty — but still
Young as at twenty —
at every wheel
Drops a kind word with
motherly zeal.

Sixty spinning wheels all awhirl;
A hundred sweet women talking as one —
Gray-haired matron and flaxen-haired girl—
Keep the house in a tumult till setting of sun
And lighting of candles, when men-folk drop in —
Husbands and lovers — increasing the din;
And over this picture so warm and fair
The old vane swings in the balmy air.

Till setting of sun
And lighting of candles.



Years have flown, and Parson Deane

With his warm-hearted wife roams a pleasanter land.

Many and many a changing scene

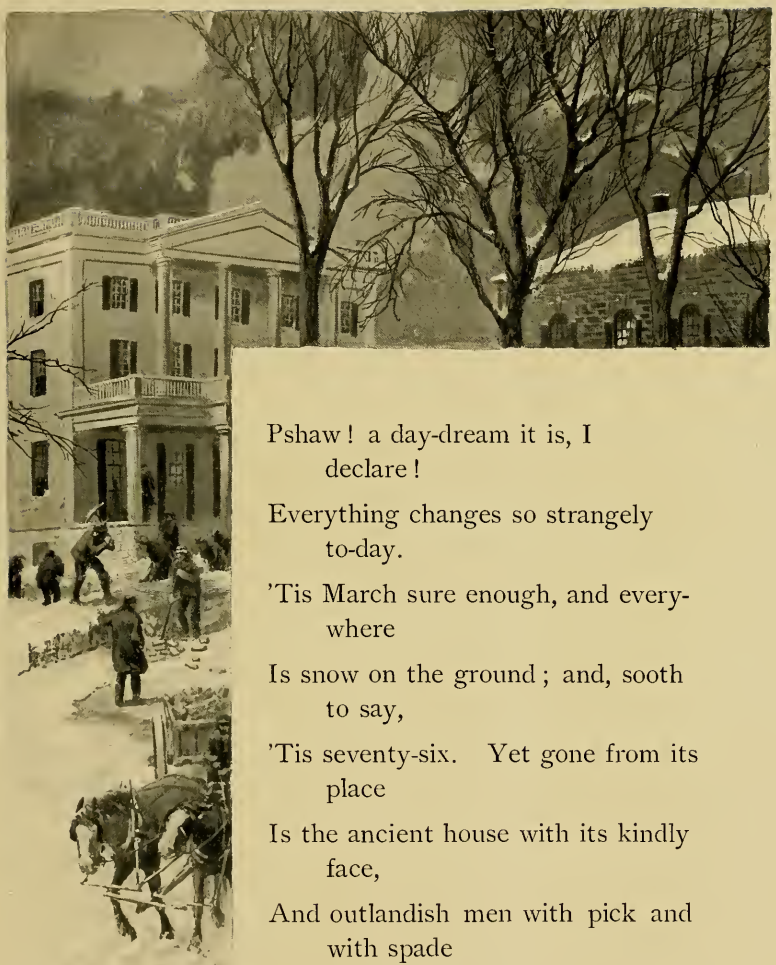
Comes and goes; Sheriff Foxcroft, so grand

With his cockaded hat and wonderful cue

And gilt-buttoned coat of colonial blue,

Buff vest, and breeches, and staff, which before

Judge Whitman he stiffly on court mornings bore.



Pshaw! a day-dream it is, I
declare!

Everything changes so strangely
to-day.

'Tis March sure enough, and every-
where

Is snow on the ground; and, sooth
to say,

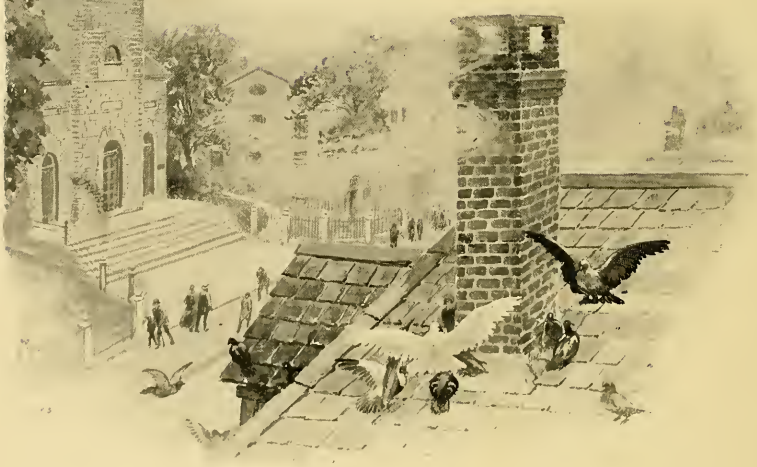
'Tis seventy-six. Yet gone from its
place

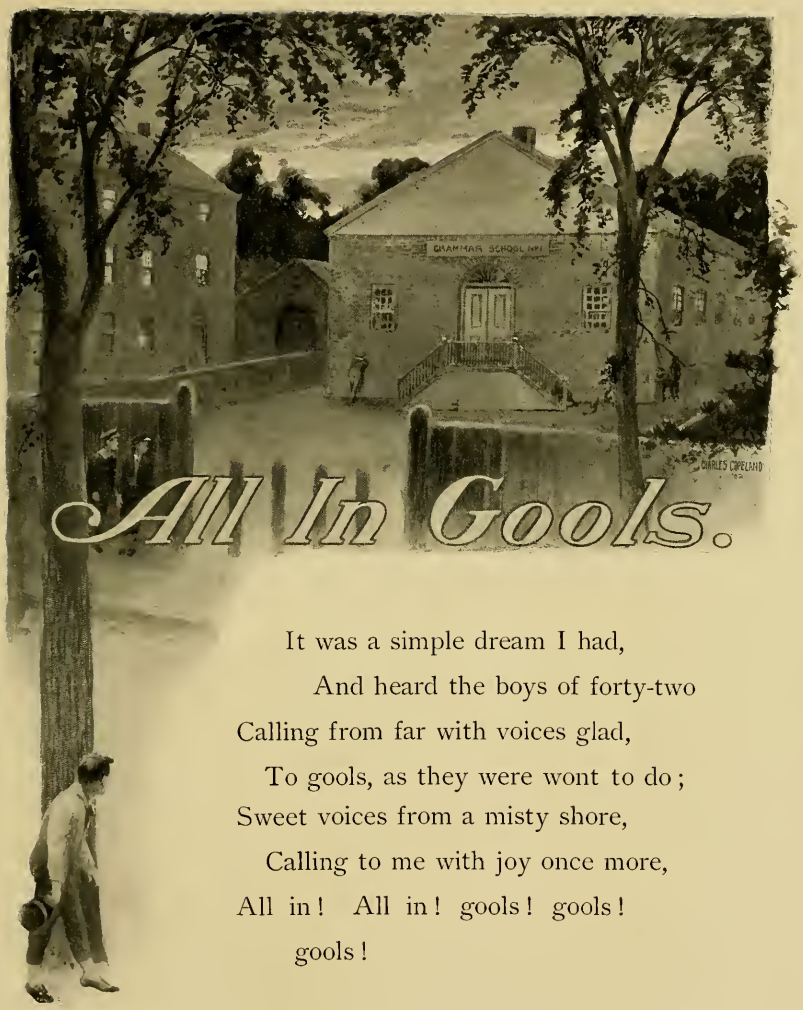
Is the ancient house with its kindly
face,

And outlandish men with pick and
with spade

Dig up foundations a century laid.

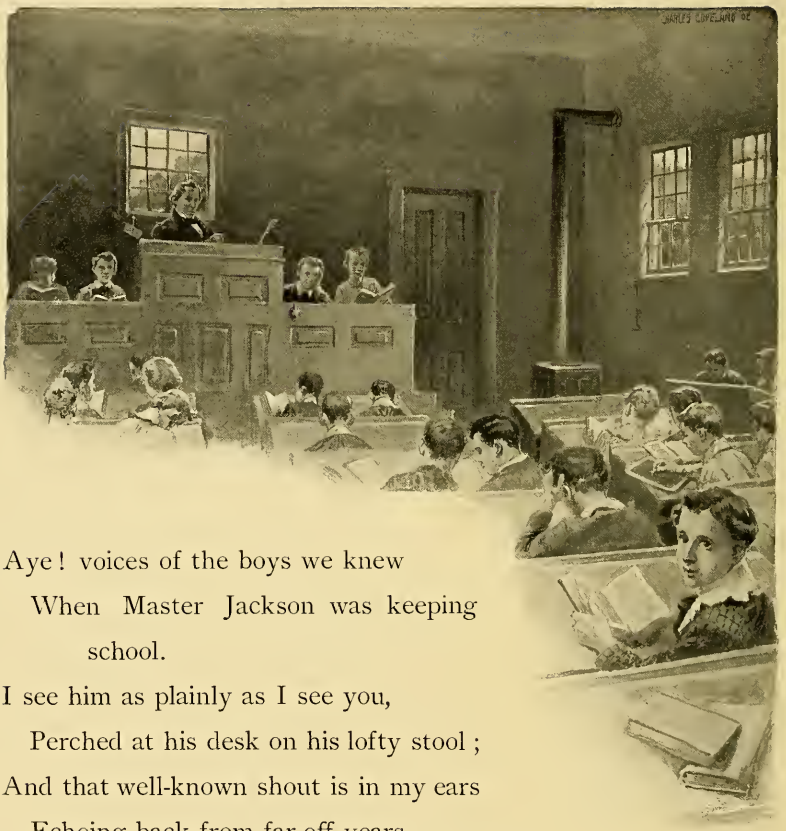
Still over the city hangs the mist,
And the smell of the sea brings a thought
of storm;
About the chimneys the smoke wreaths
twist,
And under the eaves the pigeons swarm;
This is no dream, for there in the sky,
Pointing where clouds shut the sun from
the eye,
On the First Parish spire is plainly seen
The vane which a century there hath been.





All In Gools.

It was a simple dream I had,
And heard the boys of forty-two
Calling from far with voices glad,
To gools, as they were wont to do;
Sweet voices from a misty shore,
Calling to me with joy once more,
All in! All in! gools! gools!
gools!



Aye! voices of the boys we knew
When Master Jackson was keeping school.
I see him as plainly as I see you,
Perched at his desk on his lofty stool;
And that well-known shout is in my ears
Echoing back from far-off years,
All in! All in! gools! gools! gools!

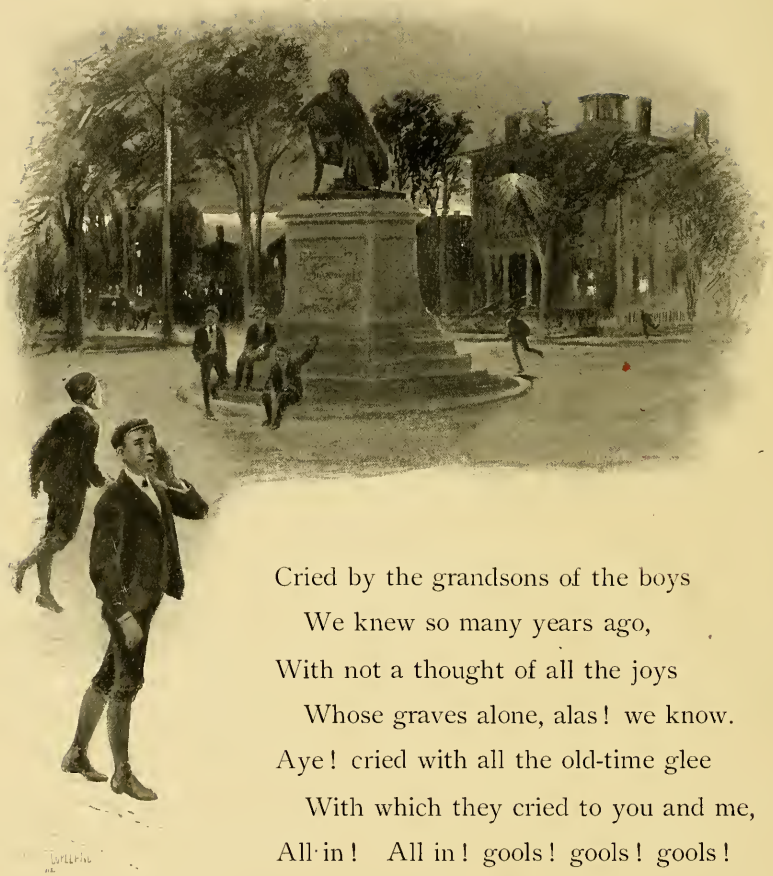
Over his spectacles, now and then,
He peered at us.

Over his spectacles, now and then,
He peered at us, as the feather frail
He clipt and carved to a shapely pen;
Trimming the nib on his broad thumb-nail.
Never could one as grave as he
Have run and cried with boyish glee,
All in! All in! gools! gools! gools!

Yet showed he oft a humor fine,
Would smile when flogging Jack
or Pete,
And question with a look benign,
If his "sap sugar" tasted sweet.
Mad boys they were; Ah, mem-
ory's ear
Still seems to catch their voices
clear,
All in! All in! gools! gools!
gools!

How played they mumble peg and tag,
Jackstones and ball when school was out ;
Or yellow oakers sought when Fall
Dropt lavishly its wealth about.
Lo ! Deering's Woods still charm the eye,
And hark ! the old familiar cry,
All in ! All in ! gools ! gools ! gools !

Or yellow oakers sought.



Cried by the grandsons of the boys
We knew so many years ago,
With not a thought of all the joys
Whose graves alone, alas! we know.
Aye! cried with all the old-time glee
With which they cried to you and me,
All in! All in! gools! gools! gools!

Then call dear ghosts — in sleep — in
dreams —
When aught may quicken memory's ear;
Your voices sweet as silvery streams
Through glooms of doubt we well may hear
Still calling us, who lag behind,
To fields we but through sleep may find,
All in! All in! gools! gools! gools!

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